

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6293

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As Passed Senate, February 13, 2002

**Title:** An act relating to venue for courts of limited jurisdiction.

**Brief Description:** Hearing certain criminal actions by video or other electronic means.

**Sponsors:** Senators Kline and Johnson.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Judiciary: 1/17/02, 1/28/02 [DP].

Passed Senate: 2/13/02, 47-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kline, Chair; Kastama, Vice Chair; Costa, Johnson, Long, McCaslin, Poulsen and Zarelli.

**Staff:** Lisa Ellis (786-7421)

**Background:** District and municipal courts must hear all criminal actions where the alleged violation occurred. Certain exceptions exist to this rule, including that district and municipal courts may hear cases by video or electronic means if the defendant has violated a local ordinance and is located outside of the court's geographic jurisdiction or boundaries.

The District and Municipal Court Judges' Association (DMCJA) recommends that the district and municipal courts' authority to hear cases by video or electronic means be extended to cases involving defendants who have violated a state criminal statute. Concern exists that courts could construe the current law narrowly to apply only to municipal ordinance violations. The DMCJA recommends amending the statutory language in order to clarify district and municipal courts' authority to have video or electronic hearings for cases involving defendants detained outside their boundaries or jurisdictions. It has been reported that broader authority to conduct electronic or video hearings would reduce costs in transporting detained defendants charged with misdemeanor offenses to courthouses within courts' geographic jurisdiction or boundaries and facilitate hearings during instances of natural disaster or civil disorder.

**Summary of Bill:** District and municipal courts have jurisdiction to conduct video or electronic hearings for criminal statute violations if the defendant is located outside the court's geographic jurisdiction or boundaries.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** This bill clarifies that courts of limited jurisdiction can hear criminal cases by electronic or video means if the defendant is located outside the court's geographic jurisdiction or boundaries.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Judge Peter Lukevich, District and Municipal Court Judges Association.